

K-033 Extravagant Love

by Art Katz

The sermon emphasizes the importance of experiencing first love, a deep, burning passion for God that enables all other obedience and is the logic of love itself.

Duration: 1:13:55

Scripture: 2 Corinthians 2:14

Topics: "Love"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the significance of the suffering and death of Jesus. The event of Jesus' crucifixion was so powerful that it caused even the dead to come out of their graves. It revealed God's love in the most profound way and serves as the ultimate revelation of who God truly is. The speaker also discusses the importance of obeying the commandment to love God with all our heart, mind, and strength, and how many Christians struggle to truly live out this commandment.

Transcript

And I'm far from any kind of authority. My prayer is that the Lord will minister to me this morning as much as you. That we all of us together will be on the receiving end.

Because our need is desperate. And few of us have any actual knowledge of this subject. In fact, not that I'm the most extensive reader around.

But there seems to be a lack of really profound Christian literature on this subject. And I think that the answer is not to be found because there's a lack of writing skill. Just a lack of actual knowledge and experience of this love.

So I would recommend to you the one from whom I am reading this morning, Basilia Schlink. I've not found anyone like her. When it comes to the knowledge of first love.

Also called bridal love. And just again to remind you that the condition in which we shall be found at the very end of and the consummation of all of God's redemptive work at the final end of the ages. Is that a bride adorned for the bridegroom.

I don't think that we should ever lose sight of that. It could easily happen when we become embroiled in what is immediately before us. The necessities for evangelism, the issues of discipleship.

The needs that are in the world. But I think it's good to keep our eyes toward heaven. Look up.

Jesus said, when these things begin to come to pass, look up. And these things have already begun to come to pass. The horrible fulfillment of the end time things.

Which makes our looking up all the more urgent and necessary. Setting our affections on the things above. Not because it's a technical requirement.

But because it's where Christ is. Don't you admire the genius of God? That he has so established things. That no kind of mechanical discipleship will suffice.

Only love. Any other obedience will run out. But only love goes beyond.

Only love will compel you to look up. And keep your affections set there. It cannot be imposed as a mechanical requirement.

It is the logic of love itself. It inheres in love. It is built in to love.

So there is one requirement foremost above every other consideration. We must be compassionate lovers of God. We have got to know in our actual experience what bridal love is.

Also called first love. First because it puts him before every other consideration. And bridal because it has eyes only for him.

Because it's intense and burning. Nothing in the world has prepared us for this. Even our previous shabby romantic experiences.

The casual matter-of-fact spirit of the world. The business-as-usual mentality. Casual and passing relationships.

Have not fitted us for this kind of intense love. So let me read a little bit about it from Baselier Schling's book. I wish I could read it all from cover to cover for you.

Because she describes how she was quite successful in ministry. Many doors were opened to her everywhere. She was an admirable Bible teacher.

Serving God diligently. Very content with her successful Christian life. Enjoying the applause and the commendation of others.

Until God convicted her of one thing. She had not obeyed the commandment. Especially the first.

Thou shalt love. No ifs or ands or buts. Thou shalt.

And not any kind of love either. But with all thy heart. All thy soul.

All thy mind. All thy strength. The total call of a total God.

Who has answered that commandment? How many of us have recognized the impossibility of the faith? This is not some clever alternative to Judaism. Or Judaism with a new wrinkle. This is altogether a devastatingly other thing.

Impossible to human attainment. It must be of God. Through God.

For God. That He be all in all. For this very bridal love that we are discussing.

Itself comes from Him. It's heavenly. Therefore it's burning.

Because God Himself is a consuming fire. It cannot be fabricated from the earth. It's not a matter of personal temperament.

It can't be drummed up or worked up. It comes from above. And it returns to above.

Through vessels who are open to receive it. Who will put away their earthly counterfeit. For the flesh is at enmity with the spirit.

It lusts against the spirit. It is always in contention with the spirit. The good is always the enemy of the perfect.

And our light kind of Christian affection. Our ability to give each other little hugs. And how are you doing brother? Is always contending against this pure and burning love which would far eclipse it.

I was sharing with Paul and Wilbert at lunch yesterday. About our community in northern Minnesota. How the Lord has sent us some really precious things.

Their very coming to us is already the evidence of true commitment. Who wants to live in 30, 40 degrees below zero weather? And winter is the largest season of the year. It doesn't end until May.

And it begins in October. So people don't come to us for little nice vacations. Let alone give up their homes, their security, their businesses and their private lifestyle.

Except for ice in the winter and mud in the spring and mosquitoes in the summer. And yet there has not been an exception to anyone who has come. Who has not cracked up within weeks or months of their coming.

Exploded. Where the seams have burst and the stuffing has come out of their little Christian dolls. Precious charismatic saints.

They had it all together. They could speak profoundly about the body of Christ. The mother of God.

Ministry. Until the pressures became intense. The intensity of this daily life together.

And the little porcelain figurine begins to crack. And then come undone altogether. And out of that death comes the reality of a resurrection life.

People who showed themselves so kind. So loving. For the first week.

I wondered to what degree we are all in a condition of deception. That our true condition simply has not been revealed. Because we have not been together intensely enough.

And long enough for God to reveal it. I would say the greatest obstacle to this first and bridal love is our own stubborn unwillingness to give up the measure that we have. Our unwillingness to give up the earthly counterpart.

It's only in the place of suffering and death that it happens. And it's a suffering and death when it does happen. That darkness come over the earth.

Before there's a breakthrough. Pressing through the veil. Of the greater glory.

What is this bridal love, this first love? She writes, it has eyes for the bridegroom alone. It's the end of all flirting. Roving eyes.

Why do we carry on like that? Because our hearts are not yet filled to the uttermost. And there's room for a little something extra. And we're scanning the horizon to see where it might come.

Because our hearts are not filled to overflowing with the love of him alone. I'll tell you children, I did not know what the word filled meant. As many times as I've been in a relationship, as many times as I have used it as a Pentecostal.

Until I was traveling through the American Midwest in the harvest season. Last year they had what they called a bumper crop, an enormous success harvest. And the corn cribs were filled up to overflowing.

And were piled over on the ground in yet another heap. And then I understood what it meant to be filled. Even coming to the brim is not enough.

It has got to flow over. And maybe this is exactly where our Christian lives fall short. Many of us are far below the full line in love.

And remember that it's a faith which works by love. How many of us have not seen it working? Not because we lacked the faith. But because we lacked the love.

I can almost fall on my face right now before God. At the genius of God. Who insists upon the two together.

And will not let us be sufficient with the one without the other. And he will not give us enough love. Can you imagine what we would be if we were great men and women of faith without love? It would be a horror of horrors.

Some kind of bristling spiritual efficiency. A Pharisaical know-it-all. Ready to do.

But without love. I'm glad that God insists. It's a faith that works by love.

Are you still too overflowing? And maybe it can be said that we really do not touch the world. Or we can plaster our vehicles with stickers and bumper slogans and all these things. We can have campaigns that we're blue in the face.

And make our knuckles bloody from knocking on doors. And we really have not impressed the world. Until the fragrance of his love overflows.

Dear children, this is a first and primary need. It took me 15 years to see it. And I could kick myself.

That I didn't realize. Why the first commandment is the first commandment. Thou shalt love.

What good are the other nine? And indeed, how can they be fulfilled? If we have not yet met this first requirement. It's only love that gives the enablement. It's only love that provokes and motivates us.

To be faithful in all the requirements of God. God has put it first. But we have put it last.

And we need to reestablish our priorities. And seek first this love. To the exclusion of all else.

And I've told God again and again and again. Praying not only for myself, but for my community. And above every other consideration, this one thing should mark us.

That we are passionate lovers of God. And I think it will save us from every error. And everything else will follow.

It has eyes for the Bridegroom alone. Such an absoluteness, she said, seems utterly lacking in her. Such an absolute attitude seemed completely absent in my own life.

God has not spoken to us about things that are absolute. Total and unconditional. Above or below.

Such a severity, such a clear demarcation in his perspective. Such an enormous depth and such an enormous... line of separation. But not in our own view.

That is also the reason why we have not recognized this need. Of a total... You think in your own experience. When have you met such a believer? That displays this kind of absoluteness and utterness toward God.

Who is absolutely impervious to the world. He simply cannot be attracted. It is all the same to him.

To abound, to abate. To increase or to decrease. What kind of a car he is in, what he is driving, what he eats or doesn't eat.

What he wears or doesn't wear, what he has or doesn't have. Single eye toward God. Such an utterness.

This has about it the flavor of things apostolic. Can I read you a little quotation from Oswald Chambers? A saint is a sacramental personality. I don't know the word.

It's a catholic word, sacramental. I don't understand. A saint is a sacramental personality.

Where did Oswald Chambers get that? Heaven. One through whom the presence of God comes to others. One through whom the presence of God comes to others.

I had written this a few months ago and this morning my eye fell upon it again. I added a further question. What then should its corporate expression be? Is a church made up of sacramental personalities? A whole body that has this utterness toward God.

Marked by first bridal love. Watch out world. They would not be able to resist the glory of such a people.

This love gives up all others. She writes, it is a spin thrift love. A lavish love that doesn't count the pennies.

One of the amusing, if not sad and melancholy experiences that men like me face continually. Is the payment we receive for services rendered. How can you put a price on the ministry? Should it be so much per day? So much per lecture? How do we evaluate its worth? Should we pay it according to need? You know what I'm struck in my heart with in most of my experience with churches? They are very minimal.

They are satisfied to be adequate. I almost feel like a man being paid for his services. But there is nothing extravagant about their gesture.

It's stingy, it's narrow. And my sadness is not for me that I'm being denied. Because the Lord sees to me abundantly.

I'm saved for their sake. And this is especially true in Europe. Because they have not learned how to give.

They don't know what extravagance means. Because the kind of extravagance that is pleasing in the Lord's sight is not something which you can be taught or instructed. It's the overflow of love.

The love to give that must give. So I see this as a symptom of lovelessness. A worldly mechanical attitude.

So much paid for services rendered. Not the fragrance of Christ. It's the stink of the world.

Of a church that needs to be profoundly converted. To the lavish love of God. That gives everything to the Beloved.

I want to examine with you this morning a little episode in Luke, the seventh chapter. Do you remember when Jesus was invited in the thirty-sixth verse to come to the house of a Pharisee to eat? And behold, a woman in the city, which was a sinner, when she knew that Jesus sat at meat in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster box of ointment and stood at his feet behind him weeping and began to wash his feet with tears and did wipe them with the hairs of her head and kissed his feet and anointed them with the ointment. And when the Pharisee, which had bidden him sought, he spoke within himself, saying, This man, if he were a prophet, would have known who and what manner of woman this is that touches him, for she is a sinner.

Jesus answering said unto him, Simon, I have something to say unto thee. And I think that the Lord has also something to say unto us. No, I think that they can follow.

Okay. There was a certain creditor which had two debtors. The one owed five hundred pence and the other fifty.

And when they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them both. Tell me therefore, which of them will love him most? Simon answered and said, I suppose that he to whom he forgave most. And he said unto him, Thou hast rightly judged.

And he turned to the woman and said unto Simon, Seest thou this woman? I entered into thine house. Thou gavest me no water for my feet. But she hath washed my feet with tears and wiped them with the hairs of her head.

Thou gavest me no kiss. But this woman, since the time I came in, hath not ceased to kiss my feet. My head was oiled.

Thou didst not anoint. But this woman hath anointed my feet with ointment. Wherefore I say unto thee, Her sins which are many are forgiven.

For she loved much. But to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little. And he said unto her, Thy sins are forgiven.

And they that said it meet with and began to say within themselves, Who is this that forgiveth sins also? And he said unto the woman, Thy faith hath saved thee. Go in peace. It's a remarkable and precious episode.

There are two others like it in the Gospels. In all three episodes, a woman is the chief actor. You know how foolish women could get They're not practical like us fellows.

They're so reckless and mindless. They'll waste anything. This is my single greatest issue with my wife.

She just does not have a proper Jewish sense of economy. We have guests and she's lavish. I would have put out just a little salad, a little bit.

No, two salads, three salads. Coffee and tea. Cake and cookies.

It's amazing how that kind of lavishness will drive a man to a fury. So I really understand the reaction of the Dutch people. I remember one of my disciples in one of these episodes when the woman came with the alabaster box and broke it.

It says they were filled with indignation. They said, To what purpose is this waste? Why, this ointment could have been sold and the money could have been distributed to the poor. They could have bought literature or tracts.

They couldn't understand this act. They were offended by it and it is still true to this very day. I met a precious young Christian on this trip that when he first came to the Lord he came in first love.

The Lord swept him off his feet. He was so beside himself in love he would walk into walls. He was enraptured in heavenly places.

But you know what the more experienced Christians said to him? You'll get over this. This won't last long. You'll come down to normal.

And sure enough when they said this he did. They could not stand to see someone so lost in love to God. It intimidated them.

They wanted to make him as they were. You'll get over this. It's true to this day.

The disciples have indignation. At this kind of lavish extravagance. That pours itself out upon the Lord.

And is not satisfied with just the minimal requirement or obligation. This Pharisee thought he was a real sport. The other Pharisees wouldn't touch Jesus with a ten foot pole.

He was quite an emancipated fellow. Quite liberal. And he was going to have this character into his house to eat.

And he fed him. I'm sure it was adequate. But he was quite proud of his largesse of soul.

His hospitality. But a stinking woman came. A putrid sinner.

The Amplified Bible says an especially wicked sinner. And she couldn't even bring herself to stand before the Lord. She stood weeping behind him.

And she washed his feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair. I don't know if you ladies could even understand this today. But there was a generation when a woman's hair was her crowning glory.

It was the best she had. And with that, she wiped the feet of the Lord. What shall we say also of tears? Maybe that's the best we have also.

It comes from the inward place. Oh, I'm not talking about some shabby sentimental tears. This wasn't just a tear.

She washed the feet of the Lord with her tears. It was a profuse overflow. An exceedingly great sufficient to wash a man's feet from the dust of the road.

I always thought that the Scriptures were just being poetic here. Really, who can cry that profusely? This is a profound, deep inner weeping. Which of us has ever come to that kind of profound breaking in the depths of our being? And it shows.

I can almost look over this room and know who has had a measure of breaking and who has not. Do you remember what I quoted to you from Finney yesterday? He wouldn't even dream to travel with any man who has not been broken down before the Lord within the space of no more than three weeks as a frequent and a recurring experience. This is not just a once and for all but God calling an entire people to live in the spirit of repentance.

Because the more truly spiritual you become the more they recognize the subtlety and the depth of their sin. And can say with Paul I am the chief of sinners. It's amazing the kind of conviction that God can bring to such souls.

I've had an occasion to visit with Basilea Schlink several occasions and I spoke to her about this. I said you speak about the necessity for daily repentance. You know how direct we Jews are.

But tell me, do you experience this yourself? You impeccable saint. You spotless glory. You radiant heavenly being.

Are you trying to tell me that you repent daily? That you are a sinner daily that you see the necessity for repentance? She was amazed at my question. But of course she said. Well give me an example for what you repented yesterday.

And when she gave me the example I repented. Because it was not anything that I would have thought of as sin. It wasn't any flagrant violation of any kind.

No real harm was done by it. It was only just a little attitude. Just an inward disposition of heart that was a little bit sullen.

It had passed in a moment. But she broke and repented over it. We had a couple of confessions last night of people who had a critical spirit.

They confessed it. But did they break and they weep over it? Maybe we need to see as God sees. That in his sight there is no such thing as a small sin.

I want to tell you that last night was the most difficult night of my ministry before you in these days. I was inwardly struggling and laboring. The flow of God was being impeded.

I don't know how to explain this. I came very prayed up. Very expectant.

Believing largely from God for great things. But we didn't get them. I wonder if so much as one or two with a critical spirit are enough to affect the flow and to grieve the spirit of God.

If it has not been dismissed by an authentic repentance and sorrow. It seems that the experience of men in true revival supports this. Jonathan Goforth who wrote the definitive book on the revivals in China.

He said that so much as one person with a contrary spirit to God was enough to affect all the meetings. That the revival fire did not flow. Until that person broke and confessed.

Or the Lord removed him. How little do we understand these things? Because we do not understand the sensitivity of the Holy Spirit. Because we have had only a functional and utilitarian attitude about the spirit of God.

Thinking of him only in terms of what he can do for us. But not contemplating him in love. Love is sensitive toward the beloved.

It changes when the loved one's mood changes. Love is careful not to bring the slightest offense. How little have we had this kind of loving attitude toward the spirit of God? Not realizing that the spirit of God is the very inner essence of him.

How much greater reverence should we have for it? And be careful not to grieve him. By earthly and fleshly attitudes that are contrary to his essence and personality. Which is burning love.

I didn't think that it would be possible to wash someone's feet with tears. But this brother says that in the Chinese revivals the floors were wet with the tears of the saints. And I saw it recently in Sweden.

A young girl bent over a chair. When she lifted her head, the seat was wet with tears. And how many of us here has God succeeded in breaking us up in the deep? Where these precious tears are to be found.

How many of us ourselves are like an alabaster box? Very nice to look upon. Singing all of the appropriate choruses. Very expert in the current vocabulary and terminology.

Impressive outward vessels. Thinking to serve God on that basis. And not recognizing that something has to come from the deep.

And that can only flow out in brokenness. I don't know as much about evangelism as you. That's not my calling.

But I just want to suggest that it has much to do with God's end time evangelism. Described in 2 Corinthians, the 2nd chapter. In the 14th and the 16th verses.

Now, thanks be unto God who always causes us to triumph in Christ. And then comes this tremendous statement. And make us manifest the savor or the fragrance of His knowledge by us in every place.

Do you remember seeing that lately? Do you remember seeing that lately? Isn't that a strange expression? The fragrance of His knowledge. We never think of knowledge as a fragrance. Let alone that it should be made manifest by us in every place.

For it says that we are a fragrance of Christ, a sweet fragrance unto them that are saved and to them that perish. To the one we are the fragrance of death unto death and to the other the fragrance of life unto life. And who is sufficient for these things? Have you ever thought about the knowledge of Him as a fragrance? Aren't you really disappointing me this morning? I thought you were kind of a two-fisted, rugged disciple type.

But this emphasis on fragrances surprises me. This is too feminine a category. And yet it says in one of the Gospel accounts of the woman who came and broke the alabaster box the whole house was filled with the fragrance.

How many of us are perfectly correct and very right in our conduct and activity and service but there is no fragrance. The fragrance of the knowledge of Him that can really turn the heads of men when mere words fail. Have you really pondered what Jesus said to the disciples who were indignant? Leave this woman alone for she has done a good work on me.

I'll tell you you'll have to search the scriptures to find where he has ever celebrated anybody else's act as being a good work. He even went further than that. He said, wheresoever this gospel shall be proclaimed in all the earth this that this woman has done shall be spoken as a memorial unto her.

What a difference between the attitude of the disciples and the attitude of Jesus. Just as great as the difference between Jesus and Peter in yesterday's message. Jesus self-celebrated this act wherever this gospel shall be proclaimed Are you conscious of how many gospels are being proclaimed today? Gospels of prosperity Gospels of self-interest Accept Jesus and you'll receive these benefits.

But where this gospel shall be proclaimed and makes manifest the knowledge of him What was the greatest revelation of the knowledge of him? In my opinion it came on the cross in his suffering and brokenness.

Something was exhibited in that suffering in that moment of ultimate agony and overwhelmed even the Roman centurion who was standing at the foot of the cross While the proud pharisaical Jews were crying come down from the cross and we'll believe you this dumb centurion this mere gentile was standing who had no religious training a pagan of pagans who had seen emperors deified as God in great pomp and ceremony saw this pitiful naked figure on the cross and the ultimate agony of his suffering yielding up his ghost and he cried out surely this is the son of God something was revealed even to this unthinking clod even to this unthinking dumb centurion that only suffering can reveal suffering somehow gets right to the heart of the issue cuts through subterfuge and deceit and concealment

something in the suffering of Jesus and the way that he died as a broken vessel poured out for the world that brought some knowledge into the soul of this Roman that he was compelled to cry out surely this is the son of God the event was so enormous that even the dead had to come out of their graves and enter into the holy city it rent the veil of the temple and cracked the stones and it will do so again and again as often as God and his people will reveal him in their brokenness it's the ultimate revelation to an unbelieving world of God as he really is nothing reveals the love of God so much as God crucified wherever this gospel shall be proclaimed in all the world this that this woman has done shall be spoken of because this act of her this act of lavish love this extravagance that was

not just careful to screw off the cap and spill out a few drops this utter recklessness which smashed the box and poured lavishly out over the head of the Lord that the whole house was filled with the fragrance is

a revelation of the heart of the gospel itself of the heart of God himself and it cannot be demonstrated by those whose alabaster boxes are still together who are just measuring out a few appropriate drops giving the minimal requirements and have not yet come to the extravagance of love Jesus said to the Pharisee I came into your house and you gave me no water for my feet and you failed even to give the minimal obligation you didn't even give me any kind of a cheap oil for my head you didn't even greet me with a kiss on my cheek but this woman this especially wicked sinner has

not ceased from the moment I've come in to wash my feet with her tears and wipe them with her hair and has anointed me with this ointment tell me there were two men who owed a debt one owed more and one owed less and which of the two shall love that creditor more who forgives their debt oh he said the one who has the greater debt he said you've answered correctly he who has been forgiven much loves much wouldn't it be an advantage for us if we were especially wicked sinners and knew it as this woman knew it but because she knew herself as she really was she also knew who he was whose feet were bathed with her tears but a religious Pharisee who was especially correct did everything right had a proper understanding he said if this man were a prophet he would know but the one who sat at his

table was far greater than a prophet but the correct religionist could not see it he could not recognize Jesus because he could not see himself it's a revelation that comes only to especially wicked sinners who are broken over it and are weeping with gratitude for the forgiveness that is extended to them by him whose feet they wash when Christ came into your house how did you receive him and how have you received him since have you accorded to him the minimal things the necessary obligations the minimal amount of prayer the appropriate amount of service have you been feeding him you've had him to your table maybe you've greeted him with a peck on the cheek a little kiss on the cheek he said I came into your house and you gave me no water for my feet you didn't greet me with a kiss you

gave me no oil for my hair how have you treated the Lord since he came into your house most of us are minimal we get by we give the appropriate amount that's required how can you measure this really what have you been pouring out on the body of Christ remember it says she poured this upon his head but when he spoke of it he said she has poured this upon my body what is poured upon the head is upon the body and what is poured upon the body is poured upon the head and what is poured upon the body is poured upon the head what have you poured out upon the body in the extravagance of love that has filled the room with the fragrance even the world knows how to be sociable and can be fraternal brotherly you can give a back slap and a bear hug how are you doing brothers but there is no fragrance

of the knowledge of him that is made manifest by us in every place Basilia Schling says that this is really also the key to power that this love has overwhelming power to go on even when obedience has spent itself love continues on it pours over because this love joins us with the bridegroom this bride that is adorned for the bridegroom that comes down from heaven is having the glory of God being like him because she is joined with him in love every other kind of joining is illicit illegal sinful it's an intimate union of being joined with the Lord by which you receive of his life and make it manifest again he'll not be satisfied with a peck on the cheek he waits for lovers who'll be joined with him intimately has that union taken place with you or have you just rendered to him the

minimal obligation since he came into your house he who has been forgiven much loves much that's the key to this love you can't pump it up you can't manufacture this it flows out with the tears of brokenness for repentance from those who have great debts and cannot pay them who are especially wicked sinners we really have a choice before us this morning I asked you last night who do you more resemble Nicodemus

or Jesus the proud Pharisee or the man of spirit I might well ask you the question this morning who do you more resemble the correct Pharisee the religious who thought he was doing very generously to have him into his house or the broken prostitute who washed his feet with her tears I'll tell you how naive I am I don't think that there's any middle course I think it's the one or the

other I don't think that there's any other category you're proud and Pharisaical correct nimble doing absolutely you're doing your obligations or we're broken and extravagant and lavish in our love he said to her thy faith hath saved thee go in peace faith is more than just subscribing to the correct doctrines true faith is an extravagance act of love that has recognized who he is because it sees who we are the Amplified says your faith hath saved you go enter into your peace and freedom from all of the distresses that are experienced as the result of sin this is the answer to those of you who are still being harassed these days have been filled with confession of sin in a kind of minimal way not in a kind of in the sense of fulfilling a required obligation.

But it is not a confession that has been extravagant, lavish, unfair, that would enable you to go in peace, a freedom from all of the distresses, a freedom from all of the vexations, inner annoyances, strives, that are experienced as a result of sin.

It's interesting that all of the disciples fled Jesus in his ultimate suffering. But a former prostitute was at the cross. Wouldn't it be humbling and humiliating for us to learn that one former prostitute like that, in the extravagance of her love, which comes out of a true repentance for being an especially wicked sinner, has done more to bless the Lord, to delight his heart, and to make him known, than all of our acts of discipleship? Love is the answer.

First love. Bridal love. You can't pump it up.

Your earthly things are in the way. Your light human affections. You need to repent of it, as an inadequate substitute, for that which is divine.

There's a connection between repentance and love. May we see it, by the eye of the spirit. And not be proud religionists who cannot see.

Or call Jesus teacher. If this man were a prophet, indignant for the man as well as for the woman, therefore not going in peace. May the house be filled with the fragrance, the house of God, in the end days, beyond all our programs and all our activities, all of our doing for God.

May this one thing characterize us above all. The house is filled with the fragrance, of the knowledge of him, made manifest by us in every place, out of our own brokenness. Have you asked the Lord for this? Have you paid your debts? Can you? Or yours were not as great as hers.

She was an especially wicked sinner. And we're not. Ours was a smaller sin, a critical spirit.

Oh, to see as the Lord sees. And to weep over it. Only the Lord can perform this, to those who are yielded to him, for his precious breaking process.

Above all of the glorious experiences that I have known in God in 15 years, triumph in victories in ministry, great breakthroughs in proclaiming the word, there's nothing that I cherish more. And when the Lord brings this breaking, I remember one time I was actually under the table at a banquet. I was a mess to look at.

I had exhausted all of my handkerchiefs and tissues. My face was awash with tears. I was mopping my face with the tablecloth that lapped over the table.

I was under the table. I didn't want to be seen of men. Such an inward breaking by God.

And some great men of God whose shoes I was unworthy to unlace. Lifted up the tablecloth. Could I help you, brother? And I burst again.

At the expression of his love. When you glimpse the love of God, it breaks your heart. May he do it for us this morning.

May we rise above mere lectures. May we receive the word of God as an event. That breaks us.

That we see by the eye of the spirit. We are especially with the spirit of God. That we may see that we are especially bad sinners.

To be a prostitute is to be especially wicked. A woman who has given her body to men for gain. But to be a proud religionist.

Correct and self-satisfied. Utterly assured in his knowledge. A woman who is only minimal to God.

And to God's people. Is worse. Shall we pray?

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/12/SID12297.mp3>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/art-katz/k-033-extravagant-love/>

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